



**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,**  
**Plaintiff,**

**v.**

**CAROLINE JOANNE HERRLING,**  
**aka Carrie Phenix,**  
**aka Caroline Gardiner,**

**Defendant.**

Case No. 2:23-MJ-0165

**ORDER OF DETENTION**

On January 17, 2023, Defendant Caroline Joanne Herrling made her initial appearance on the Complaint filed in this matter. Defendant was represented by retained counsel Alex R. Kessel. At Defendant's request, the detention hearing was continued to January 24, 2023, and a detention hearing was held on that date. At the detention hearing, Defendant was present in court and consented to the appearance of her counsel at that hearing via video conference.

1        ☒ On motion of the Government [18 U.S.C. § 3142(f)(1)] in a case  
2 allegedly involving a narcotics or controlled substance offense with maximum  
3 sentence of ten or more years.

4        ☒ On motion by the Government or on the Court's own motion  
5 [18 U.S.C. § 3142(f)(2)] in a case allegedly involving a serious risk that the  
6 defendant will flee.

7        ☒ On motion by the Government or on the Court's own motion  
8 [18 U.S.C. § 3142(f)(2)] in a case allegedly involving a serious risk that the  
9 defendant will obstruct or attempt to obstruct justice, or threaten, injure, or  
10 intimidate a prospective witness or juror, or attempt to do so.

11        The Court concludes that the Government is entitled to a rebuttable  
12 presumption that no condition or combination of conditions will reasonably  
13 assure the defendant's appearance as required and the safety of any person  
14 or the community [18 U.S.C. § 3142(e)(2)].

15        The Court finds that no condition or combination of conditions will  
16 reasonably assure:

17                ☒ the appearance of the defendant as required.

18                ☒ the safety of any person or the community.

19        The Court has considered the following:

20        (a) the nature and circumstances of the offense(s) charged, including  
21 whether the offense is a crime of violence, a Federal crime of terrorism,  
22 or involves a minor victim or a controlled substance, firearm, explosive,  
23 or destructive device;

24        (b) the weight of evidence against the defendant;

25        (c) the history and characteristics of the defendant; and

26        (d) the nature and seriousness of the danger to any person or the  
27 community.  
28

1 See 18 U.S.C. § 3142(g) The Court also considered the Government's  
2 Submission in Support of Request for Detention [Dkt. No. 3], the email dated  
3 January 19, 2023, from the Government to the U.S. Pretrial Services Agency  
4 entitled "Re: Caroline Herrling – new information for detention hearing" and  
5 the "Belize Corp documents.pdf" and "Belize trip and power of attorney.pdf"  
6 that were attached to the mail, the Pretrial Service Reports dated January 17  
7 and January 24, 2023, the Complaint and supporting Affidavit, and the  
8 arguments of counsel at the hearing.

9 The Court bases its conclusions on the following:

10 As to risk of non-appearance:

11 ☒ The Affidavit describes an extensive, sophisticated, brazen  
12 scheme by Defendant to defraud vulnerable victims and engage in identity  
13 theft and to obstruct investigation into her conduct;

14 ☒ As law enforcement has been able to trace only a small  
15 percentage of the proceeds of this scheme, Defendant has the financial  
16 resources to fund a flight from prosecution;

17 ☒ In the search of Defendant's office, law enforcement found  
18 numerous identity documents not in Defendant's name, including fake and  
19 stolen driver's license and California ID, credit cards, social security cards,  
20 and birth certificate, as well as fake documents that appeared to be in the  
21 process of production and materials to facilitate the forgery of wills and trusts  
22 documents.

23 ☒ Saved screenshots on Defendant's phone show that in  
24 response to an inquiry from her assistant, Defendant provided the location of  
25 the "Belize corps documents," that Defendant discussed airline ticket prices  
26 to Belize; in the search law enforcement found a current U.S. Passport in the  
27 name of Andrea Gomez along with handwritten notes about creating a law  
28 office under that name and whether Public Storage has a specific form to

1 authorize the release of property, and a standard form U.S. government non-  
2 disclosure agreement for classified information.

3       ☒ Law enforcement found two authentic looking, non-  
4 serialized federal law enforcement badges, one for the Drug Enforcement  
5 Administration and the other for the U.S. Diplomatic Security Service, in  
6 Defendant's office and a serialized Beverly Hills Police Detective badge in her  
7 bedroom;

8       As to danger to the community, in addition to all of the information  
9 listed above:

10       ☒ In the closet in Defendant's bedroom, law enforcement  
11 found several assault weapons, including AF15 type guns, AR15 receivers, a  
12 shotgun and magazine secreted near Defendant's bed was a gun stash that  
13 required the use of magnets to uncover, and a ghost gun was found near her  
14 bed. A total of 16 guns, many loaded, were found in the search. legations in  
15 the indictment involve threatening behavior and conduct to protective  
16 security officers at the Social Security Administration

17       ☒ In the safe in Defendant's office, law enforcement found  
18 eight gross grams of substance that tested positive for methamphetamine.

19       ☒ The details of the fraud and obstruction of justice scheme  
20 indicate that Defendant presents an extreme economic danger, particularly to  
21 elderly people.

22       It is therefore ORDERED that Defendant Caroline Herrling be  
23 detained until trial. The defendant will be committed to the custody of the  
24 Attorney General for confinement in a corrections facility separate, to the  
25 extent practicable, from persons awaiting or serving sentences or being held  
26 in custody pending appeal. The defendant will be afforded reasonable  
27 opportunity for private consultation with counsel. On order of a Court of the  
28 United States or on request of any attorney for the Government, the person

1 in charge of the corrections facility in which defendant is confined will deliver  
2 the defendant to a United States Marshal for the purpose of an appearance in  
3 connection with a court proceeding. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 3142(i).

4 Dated: January 24, 2023

5  
6 **PATRICIA DONAHUE**

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8 **UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE**  
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